THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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PRAYER.

ॐ

नमस्ते शरण्ये शिवे सानुकम्पे
नमस्ते जगद्व्यापिके विश्वरूपे ।
नमस्ते जगद्वन्द्यपादारविन्दे
नमस्त जगत्तारिणि त्राहिदुर्गे ॥
अनाथस्य दीनस्य तृष्णातुरस्य
भयार्तस्य भीतस्य बद्धस्य जन्तोः ।
त्वमेका गतिर्देवि निस्तारदात्री
नमस्ते जगत्तारिणि त्राहिदुर्गे ॥

O Goddess Durga ! Thou Who art Ever-blissful, Ever-compassionate, Thou Who pervadeth the whole universe and assumeth the universal form, to Thee my salutations. Thou Whose lotus feet the universe worshippeth, Thou Who art the Liberator of the universe itself, to Thee my salutations. Thou, Eternal Refuge ! I seek refuge in Thee.

O Goddess Durga ! Thou Who art the Saviour of the poor and the helpless, Thou Who art the Protector of the terror-stricken and the afflicted, Thou Who art the Resort of the thirsty and the bound, to Thee my salutations. Thou Who art the Sole-giver of emancipation, Thou Who art the Liberator of 'the universe itself, to Thee my salutations ! Thou, Eternal Refuge ! I Seek refuge in Thee.

VISWASARA TANTRA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(*Continued fram page 165*)

Three things are essential for the realisation of God—human birth, desire for salvation and company of holy men. By the grace of God you have got all these three. Now make the best use of these rare opportunities and attain the supreme object of human birth. What is the good of running after fleeting pleasures when you can attain eternal peace and happiness? Renouncing everything you have taken refuge at His lotus feet with the noble aspiration of realising Him; see therefore that your life is not spent in vain. Remember this thing, my boy, it is possible to be born again as man and have the spiritual hankering as well, but I can assure you, that the company of such holy men (disciples of Sri Ramakrishna) as you enjoy now is your rare privilege and you cannot expect to have it always. The blessing of the holy company as this comes to one as a result of great merit, accumulated during many births. Therefore I enjoin on you to make the best use of this opportunity instead of wasting your life in worthless pursuits.

Faith and intense faith in the words of your Guru will make everything easy for you. Without this all forms and rituals of a religion are simply useless. So surrender yourself absolutely to your preceptor as does a kitten to its mother. He will then look after you and provide you with everything; yours is only to have the simple faith in him alone.

How far can your intellect go? He who has taken your burden on himself, has his sense of responsibility, and feels anxious for your welfare much more than you do. He will save you from all dangers and difficulties.

No evil can befall a faithful disciple who is under the protecting wings of the Guru.

Men will surely go wrong so long as they do not realise God. But if they surrender themselves to the Guru, the chances of committing error will evidently be much less than what would be otherwise. Remember Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the father and the son walking over narrow ridges across the field. If the father himself takes hold of the son's hand, there is no fear of of the latter slipping off his feet ; but if the son tries to take hold of the father's arm there is a chance of his falling down. Let those who have got the grace of their competent Guru rest content leaving it to him to cure them of all their defects.

And renunciation being the *Sine quo non* for attaining peace and happiness everything should be given up for the sake of God. Unbroken Brahmacharya (continence) is also what is most required of one seeking for the Lord. Man without continence is as good as an animal. Discrimination is the line of demarkation between man and brute. Man can realise God if he strives for it but the brute cannot. The latter is a complete slave of the senses. And a man who is ruled by passions is no better than a brute.

If you wish to possess real peace and hapiness and taste joy and cheerfulness in this very life hold fast to God giving up all. Don't think that renunciation consists in wandering about with a pair of tongs in hand and smearing the body all over with ashes. The outward marks of Tyaga (renunciation) meant only for show bring no good ; they are on the other hand most harmful. Real renunciation consists in the complete surrender of one's self to the will of God. Pray to Him saying : "My Lord ! my body, my mind and everything are Thine own ; Thou mayest use them as Thou wilt." Have you not heard that Sri Ramakrishna knew

nothing but the Divine Mother, and that whatever he did was according to Her will and guidance ? So always pray to God, "Lord, I do not know what is good and what is bad ; I am merely Thy servant and let Thy will be done." Struggle incessantly to make this attitude permanent. If you surrender yourself completely unto God, He will get done through you all that is needful. Therefore pray, ever pray to Him and take shelter at his feet. One thing more I like to impress upon your mind. Whether you are praised or blamed, whether you are honoured or insulted, whether there be a place in the world for you or no and lastly whether your body stands or falls, now that you have understood that the end and aim of human life is to realise God, do not swerve even an inch from this ideal. Say with a firm determination : "I must realise God here and now at any cost."

It is only when you can cast your life in this mould, can you be a man and a true and worthy child of Sri Ramakrishna. Your *Sat-Sanga* (company of holy men) will then bear fruit and you will be blessed. Otherwise your life would be a waste ; and between you and a brute there would be no difference. You will not deserve to be called a worthy son of Sri Ramakrishna.

One other point which I wish you to bear in mind always is this. Ordinary people understand by the term Guru, a person who whispers some Mantram into the ear of the disciple. They do not care to know whether he possesses all the qualifications of a true preceptor. But to-day such a conception is loosing ground. It is now being recognised that none but a realised soul is qualified to be a spiritual teacher. He who does not know the path himself cannot show it to others. Mantras are to-day as potent as ever ; but those who trade in spiritual lore are ignorant of the rules governing them and they themselves are not able to make any real

progress. Much less therefore their disciples and hence they cannot obtain real peace and happiness.

Sri Ramakrishna has turned the tide. And the most invaluable spiritual gems are to be found in his disciples. All faithful devotees wherever they may be must necessarily be drawn to them ; for true peace and happiness can be obtained from them alone. Those who have got the blessings of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna are really fortunate. And if they can with firm faith and steadfast devotion follow them who are the children of the great Master, they will surely attain to the Supreme Bliss, the goal of human life. These great followers of Sri Ramakrishna are the custodians of the spirit of the age. They know full well the various paths of spiritual Sadhana suited to the time. They instruct those who go to them for spirituality in a manner suited to their spiritual evolution. Initiation they have given to some in a formal manner, to some others in the form of spiritual talks and to others in dreams. Proceed along the path which has been your good fortune to be blessed with. Pray to your Guru with the faith of a child and he will certainly do all that is needful. He is the best Guru, who, whether his physical body stands or falls, will see that everyone of his disciples attains liberation. The speciality of this age is that even after the disappearance of his physical body, the Guru appears in flesh to his disciples to guide and bless them.

Strive and struggle ceaselessly. Shake off all doubts and plunge yourself in your Sadhana to realise and make your own what you have learnt from your Guru. Let not spiritual practices be done for show, or to catch the public eye ; but follow them silently and steadily, so that even your neighbours might not know of them. There may be people who might ridicule you or shake your faith ; there may be others who by their

praise and respect for you, increase your egotism. Therefore always bear in mind this great teaching of Sri Ramakrishna: "Meditate in your mind, in the forest or in a quiet corner". The meaning of this is that all your Sadhana must be done in strict privacy that others may not come to know of it. If you steadily practise like this for some time even, you will find what great joy and bliss come to you. You will be a changed man altogether. You who have renounced the world in His name, therefore say with all firmness: "Realise Him I must, now and in this very life." Yes, let this be the supreme aim in life. You have got the blessings of a real Guru and you are bound to succeed. There can not be, my child, the least doubt about it.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Crisis of Christian Missions in China

Christian missions are passing through a great crisis in China. With the rise of the tide of nationalism the Chinese have come to look upon the foreign missionaries as stumbling blocks in the way of their national self-realisation. The "yellow heathens" seem to have lost all faith in the "white Christians" who seem to be more anxious to save the souls of others from eternal perdition than their own. They have found out to their horror that if they want to have the Bible they must lose all their lands. If they are to become meek, as they are asked to be by the missionary, instead of inheriting the earth, as Christ promises, they will have to disinherit even their own hearth and home. At the recognition of this national danger, even a large number of Chinese Christians are anxious to free themselves from their foreign and "foreign-protected" religion. And many among the vast majority of the Chinese people, who are true to their ancestral faith, have come to regard Christianity as a "memorising art" used by the Western imperialists on weakminded persons, "making them lose control of their faculties and receive indignities while unconscious." No wonder then that the Chinese as a nation have been actuated by a great antagonism towards the entire Christian missionary move-

ment which they think to be a part of the political game of the aggressive Western nations. In consequence hundreds of missionaries, religious, educational and medical, have been forced to leave China. Some have resigned their service which, though profitable, has become fraught with danger. Some again are returning home on furlough, while others are being transferred to neghbouring countries. Innumerable churches, schools and hospitals have been closed. The entire missionary movement in China has been completely disorganised, and there seems to be little chance of its resuming its widespread activities as before. The Chinese Leviathan was not dead as many of the Western nations fondly believed. It was only asleep, and has now awakened, refreshed and strengthened by its prolonged rest. And it is determined to free its homestead from the foreign aggressors and exploiters who have endangered not only its religious culture but also its political and economic freedom.

The Missionary Movement in China

It is an undeniable fact that the Christian missions have rendered great service to China in various ways. Through their schools and colleges they have introduced modern education and modern thought. Their hospitals and dispensaries, orphanages and widows' homes, leper asylums and institutions for the deaf and the dumb, their schools for training Chinese students in medicine and nursing have introduced modern methods of alleviating human misery and suffering in many parts of the country. The missionaries have also been the chief interpreters of Chinese life and thought to the West. But they again have been guilty of being the worst enemies of the Chinese civilisation. In their schools in China they have decried the national culture of the land, its literature and arts, its ethics and religion. With a view to raise large sums of money to carry on their work in China, they have also carried on an organised propaganda depicting Chinese life in its worst colours, and creating pity and sympathy in the minds of the kind but ignorant men and women in the West. Even to this the Chinese do not attach any great importance. In their eyes the greatest offence of the missionaries has been their alliance with the political and commercial interests of their respective countries. True, the Christian priests from the West are dominated by race consciousness and preach an extreme form of religious imperialism which is anxious to see the destruction of all other religions not only in China but also in the whole world, both Eastern and Western. The Chinese with their proverbial tolerance are

prepared to brook even this. But what they cannot bear to see is the unholy union of religious imperialism, with the political and economic imperialism so dangerous to their solidarity as a nation. It is this that they are determined to put an end to at any cost.

The Main Cause of the Crisis

Whatever might have been the ideal of the early Christian missionaries in China, those who followed them have allowed themselves to become instruments in the hands of political and commercial powers. Knowingly or unknowingly the missionaries have led the trader into unexplored and unexploited lands. And on the plea of protecting religion and trade, foreign goverments have sent their gunboats to these regions and deprived the helpless Chinese of their valuable lands and natural resources. The missionaries have thus become in many cases the "advance agents" of Western imperialism, and have also been amply rewarded for their services. They enjoy along with all foreign residents the special privileges under the so-called "treaty rights" wrung from the Chinese Government by Western powers. They also possess the right to travel and reside in the interior away from the so-called "treaty ports," the right to purchase or lease property in the interior and other rights not shared by the representatvies of non-Christian religions such as Buddhism and Mohammedanism in China. It is but natural that China should become deadly antagonistic towards the "gun boat treaties" and those who enjoy them to her great shame and humiliation. The Chinese deprived of their valuable seaports, tariff autonomy and other sovereign rights have become suspicious of all Westerners, missionary and non-missionary. It is impossible for them to forget that both Christianity and opium were forced on them by Western brute force, and if they "were free to abstain from Christianity, as from opium, they were not free to prohibit them." The so-called anti-Christian movement in China is the natural consequence of what the Christian nations of the West have done in China in the name of furthering the cause of civilisation and religion.

Future of Christian Missions in China

What the future of the Christian missions in China is likely to be is difficult to prophesy. It will, however, depend on the attitude of both the people of China and the missionaries from the West. Different groups of Chinese hold different ideas about Christianity. The extreme nationalists are strongly antagonistic towards it as they consider its missionaries to be tools of imperia-

lism. Another group of Chinese oppose it because they think it to be suited only to the uncultured and undeveloped minds. Others are against it as they look upon it as "irrational, unscientific and unnecessary". Some are indifferent; some also are tolerant towards it. Some appreciate it as a movement that wants to better the world. While some again welcome it, and more than the religion its missionaries who help them during times of famine, epidemic and other calamities. "I think", says an American missionary who worked for many years in China, "the attitude can be summed up by saying that the Christian messenger, who comes with a spiritual message, humbly and co-operatively to live among the people, will always be welcome throughout China. The Chinese are instinctively tolerant and hospitable to the true religious worker. He must, of course, be wholly rid of all political and commercial associations". Events in China are bringing about a great change in the mind of the missionaries. Many among them are coming to hold that the Christian Church should cease to be a foreign institution if it wants to live and thrive on the soil of China. They declare that the missionary should no longer be anxious to be the recipient of treaty privileges, be ready to serve under Chinese Government, give more administrative power to the Chinese workers and "above all he must minimise official status and emphasise personal service, showing a passion of friendship." This changed attitude is already manifesting itself in the working of some of the Christian educational institutions in China, which according to the Government demand have abolished the compulsory religious instruction of its pupils. There is no doubt that the Christian missionaries in so far as they are imbued with the spirit of selfless service will ever be in demand in China as elsewhere like the true missionaries of all other religions in the world,

Christian Missions in India

The revolutionary events in China have a unique significance to the Christian missionaries in India. As in China, so in India, they have done both great good and evil to its people though it may not be exactly in the same way and to the same extent. Through their educational and charitable institutions they have rendered invaluable service to India in spreading education and mitigating sufferings. But they have been at the same time the greatest opponents of Indian religion and culture. The average Christian preacher who is as biassed as ignorant about Indian religion speaks of it as nothing but a mass of childish superstition

and gross immorality. The educational missionary, under the cover of secular instruction, tries to undermine the cultural life of the student. He speaks in the most damaging terms of India's time-honoured institutions and heroes and the ideals they represent. He paints to him what he thinks to be the darkest aspect of Indian civilisation and at the same time the brightest side of Western culture which, however, as he wants others to believe, is not synonymous with Christianity. The medical missionary who usually comes in touch mostly with the lowest strata of Indian society and with the darkest side of their character, thinks these to be representative of the entire Indian people, high and low. And he rushes to describe the Indians, men and women, in the filthest possible terms in the use of which he seems to have acquired a special profciency. Referring to these mean slanderers of India, who seem to have a great attraction for the gross and the immoral, observes Sister Nivedita in righteous anger—"It seems as if to them nothing had been sacred. In all lands, doctors, and clergymen see the misfortunes of the home, and professional honour keeps their lips sealed. But here all has been put upon the market. Medical records (always unpleasant reading) have been detailed in public, from platform and pulpit. And the professional consideration that ought to have prevented such dishonour only intervene, if at all, to forbid the use of speaker's names in connection with statements made by them in full publicity to large audiences." Besides, misusing India's hospitality and tolerance, the missionaries and semi-missionaries have created a vast mass of "Christian literature" which depicts the Hindu religion as "a weltering chaos of terror, darkness and uncertainty," and the Hindus as a people who follow this religion "without definite commandments, without a moral code, without a God", and who seem to have made a special monopoly of all the most horrible social evils existing on the face of the earth. It is significant that very few in India care at all for these books save probably the tourists and globe trotters who, as is generally the case, come here only to misunderstand and if possible misinterpret the great Indian people and their civilisation. These precious books are lying on the shelves of societies like the Christian Literature Society of India. If ever the Christian missionaries, who by their unscrupulous actions have forfeited the sympathy of the educated Indians, be ever anxious to get it back, they must first of all consume to ashes all this mass of abomination that disgraces alike the English and the vernacular languages of India.

Lessons from China

The missionaries have stood opposed not only to the religion and civilisation of the Indians but also to their legitimate national aspirations. Almost all missionary bodies look upon India's struggle for self-government with an eye of suspicion and disfavour. Apart from the imperial and racial bias, the one consideration that seems to weigh with them is the fear that a free India will not be prepared to encourage and render financial support to any alien organisation whose chief function is to wean the children of the soil from their ancient culture and civilisation. The cataclysmic happenings in China should be an eye-opener to the Christian missionaries in India. As in China, so in India, they stand not for social solidarity but for disintegration. Members of alien nations and countries, they ever want to remain as foriegners, and tend to make the Indian Christians and others coming into the spell of their influence strangers in their own lands, out of touch with the formative forces of life around them. But realising the gravity of the evil, the thoughtful among the Indian Christians are decidedly turning more than ever to their motherland and to her ancient heritage. With this change in their out-look, the attitude of the saner among the missionaries is also undergoing unexpected modification. They are taking note of the new spirit and are anxious to avert the repetition of the Chinese catastrophe in India. Some of them have already changed their method of wholesale condemnation to one of "Sympathetic treatment" of Indian culture and found in it "much that is too precious to be lost and also much that is useless and distinctly unhealthy." This is decidedly a change for the better although it is not all that could be desired. But greater transformations are going to take place in the near future. If the Christian missionaries want to work in India they must fulfil and not destroy. And to do this they must first of all come in touch with the soul of India, especially through those who embody in their lives its highest ideals. Like all other cultures Hindu culture too has its defects and merits. If the missionaries come to study India with a captious mind and with the supercilious spirit of an arrogant critic they will find here immorality and superstition which as a matter of fact exists more or less in all the countries of the world. But if on the other hand, they come with a purity of purpose and with the inquiring spirit of a sincere student, they will be struck to witness in India a purity and holiness, an idealism and spirituality that they may seek elsewhere but cannot find. It is for them to decide what they want. And it is for

them again to choose whether they should be evil agencies for dividing the Indian and Western nations by their propaganda of calumny or be a beneficient force for bringing about the happy union of these people by their faithful representation of the highest ideals of both India and the West. If they take up the former function the time is sure to come when they will have to face a calamity much greater and more disastrous than what has taken place in China. If they choose the latter they will always be welcomed by the people of India as a power for doing good, and by the leaders of Indian thought as fellow workers for establishing peace on earth and good will among men of all races and nationalities. But their spirit of service must be perfectly selfless and sincere.

The New Ideal of Service

As in China, so in India there is at present a clear dislike for the Christian missionary and his religion. The Indians strongly disapprove of the missionary propaganda of misrepresentation of India in Western lands and that of denationalisation in India itself. They have become tired of hearing of the glory of the Christian religion which the preachers want to try on Indians, but do not practice themselves in their own lives. In spite of the scrupulous attempts of the missionary to paint the Westerners at their best and hide the darker side of their life, educated Indians have found out the real truth as Rev. Charles, W. Gilkey, the last Barrows lecturer to India, has very frankly acknowledged—"With the white man money has been the most important consideration, and religion neglected and forgotten. India is beginning to look askance at the Christianity presented to it in the Occidental garb, wrapped up in Western paper, and addressed in a Western hand. The Orient has heard enough of theories about the Christian religion, and now desires to learn how much of that religion is practised by the Occidentals." Religion the Indians have enough and to spare; they do not feel the necessity of borrowing it from the Westerners. But what they need most urgently is real social service that must not be made subservient to any worldy gain or achievement. If they assumed an attitude of antagonism towards the Christian movement, it is because they want it, in the apt words of an Indian Christian writer, Mr. John Jesudason Cornelius, "to disentangle itself from all its political complications, to substitute disinterested service for proselytizing as its motive, to seek to supplement and not to supplant, to be domestic and not

foreign, to be concerned more with life and less with dogma." In case the missionaries want to render selfless service, they will find infinite scope for it in India. They may feed the hungry, heal the sick, clothe the naked, educate the illiterate, and ameliorate the pitiable condition of India's teeming millions in many ways. But this they should do without disturbing their religious and social life, without entertaining any thought of conversion and of increasing the so called Christian fold. In place of the old ideal of interested service, let them now take up a higher and nobler form of service without making any distinctions of race and religion, without trying in any way to convert those that belong to an alien faith. Each act of service, whether physical, intellectual or spiritual, let them learn to regard as service not to man but to the God-in-man. As Swami Vivekananda puts it, "The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest good . . . Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for him, not of helping him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind . . . You worship. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe." If the Christian missionaries want to work in India, sooner or later, they will have to take up this Vedantic ideal of service. Whether they will do it out of their own goodness or out of compulsion from outside, it is for them and their supporters to decide.

A TALK TO STUDENTS

By Swami Atulananda

(Continued from the last issue)

Now there is a third point I wish to bring to your notice, that may prove helpful not only in your studies, but also in your after life, and that is the necessity of acquiring the power to concentrate the mind. "If I had to begin my life all over again," Swami Vivekananda once said, "I would from the very beginning practise concentration of mind." A mind that can concentrate can penetrate all things, can acquire all knowledge, can solve all problems. The power of concentration of mind is another secret to success.

"Truth," the Upanishad says, "concealed in all living beings does not shine. But it is seen by subtle seers with keen intellects, who know how to concentrate their minds."

The value of the power to concentrate the mind on the work one undertakes to do, was once illustrated in the life of the

Pandava brothers. Dronacharya had trained the young princes in the art of shooting. One day he wanted to examine them to see how far they had progressed. An artificial bird was placed on the branch of a tree. Then the princes were told to shoot through the eye of the bird. It was a very difficult feat indeed. But they all wanted to try. First came Sahadeva. He placed an arrow on his bow, and began to aim at the bird. But before he let go the arrow, Dronacharya asked, " Sahadeva, what do you see?" " I see the tree and the branch, and the bird on the branch," the young prince replied. "Enough!", Dronacharya exclaimed, "you need not shoot." Then came Nakul. He also aimed. And when asked what he saw, he replied, " I see the branch of the tree and the bird on the branch." He also was not allowed to shoot. Now Bhima came. The same question was asked. "I see the bird." Bhima replied. He was also dismissed. Then Yudhistira came. " What do you see?" Dronacharya asked. " I see the head of the bird," was the reply. " Very well," Dronacharya said, " you need not shoot." Now Arjuna alone was left. He came and aimed. " What do you see, Arjuna ? ", the old teacher asked anxiously. "Sir," Arjuna replied, " I see only the eye of the bird." " Shoot !" Dronacharya exclaimed. And when Arjuna let go the arrow it pierced the eye of the bird.

Of the five brothers, Arjuna alone knew perfectly how to concentrate his mind. The eye of the bird was his aim, and while his brothers saw the bird, and the branch and the tree, he did not even see the head, he saw only the eye in the head of the bird. The wise teacher knew that the others would have failed because their minds went beyond the mark. For the senses are only the instruments of the mind. Because the mind was not concentrated, the eye also wavered, and the hand could not be steady.

Whatever we do we should do with heart and soul with all our might and strength, be it study, or play, or our religious devotions. What is our aim ? That is the first question. That settled, let us be Eka-nistha, one pointed, always moving forward towards the goal. Looking neither to the right nor to the left, we must push onward to reach our goal, not resting till the goal is reached, never wavering.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna taught this same idea in a simple, little story. A farmer was irrigating his land. He worked all day but the water had not yet reached his fields. Towards evening his wife came and said, " My dear, you have worked all day, now

come home, take your food and rest. To-morrow there is another day." The husband responded, put aside his spade and went home. But when to-morrow came his harvest was spoiled for lack of water. Another farmer was also irrigating his fields, but when *his* wife came he scolded her, "Don't you know we will starve if our harvest fails ?" He finished his task, and not until then did he go home to eat and rest. His crops were saved. Here was tenacity of purpose which is possible only for a controlled mind.

The quality of concentration of mind proper we find strongly represented in the Yogis of India who pierce the veil of Maya through one pointed meditation when all the powers of the mind are focussed on one single thought.

How far this may go we find illustrated in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Italian monk. It is said that one day he travelled on an ass, led by a brother monk. They passed through a little town where the people came out with song and music to do honour to the Saint. But Saint Francis's mind was firmly fixed on God. He knew not where he was, or what went on around him It was only when his companion stopped the animals and lifted him down from the ass that Francis came to his external senses again.

Concentration of mind is also practised in the West, even in business. where men have to come to quick and important decisions. These men see in a flash all the pros and cons when difficult problems are placed before them. Such men reach the highest step in the ladder of success. They become the leaders, the foremost men in whatever occupation they may be engaged, The greatest inventor of our age is an American, Mr. Edison. Of him it is said that when he wants to work out a problem he locks himself in his room, and no one is allowed to disturb him. There he sits for long hours, sometimes for days and nights for getting his surroundings, forgetting the demands of the body—food and drink and sleep—his mind occupied with his new invention. Of Beethoven, the great pianist, it is said that when he sat at his piano he did not see or hear anything that went on around him. His mind was occupied solely with his composition, and he became one of the greatest musicians of his time. Such men know how to bring out a part of the perfection that is in every man.

But to concentrate the mind is difficult. It must be practised faithfully, as we are told by Sri Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, "Without doubt, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless, and difficult to control; but through practice it may be governed."

There is an amusing story of a man who thought he could control his mind. Two travellers met at an inn. One was on horseback, the other on foot. During their talk the one who came on foot began to brag of his ability to concentrate his mind on any given subject. The other did not believe him, so they decided on a wager. The horse-man staked his horse, the other put up a sum of money. The test was simple. The boaster had to count to one hundred with concentrated mind. He began – one, two, three, four, and so on. But when he came to thirty, he suddenly stopped and asked, does the saddle go with the horse? Of course, he lost the bet.

What is the source of perfection? It is our own true self, the Atman in every being. All knowledge, all strength all power, is locked up within ourselves. The object of education is to teach us how to unlock the gate of knowledge, strength and power locked up within ourselves. The object of education is to teach us how to unlock that gate, that knowledge, strength and power may manifest through us.

"The entrance of the True," the Isopanishad tells us, "is obstructed by a golden disk." We must pierce through the disk. With concentrated mind we must pierce through all obstructing thoughts, that we may reach the truth, the truth of science, the truth of religion, the truth, in every walk in life.

"God created the senses out-going," another Upanishad says, "therefore one sees outside, the surface of things, and not the truth within. Some intelligent man turned his mind inward, and there beheld the truth."

Learn to turn your mind inward, think deeply, meditate with concentrated mind, and all problems will reveal their secrets. With that power developed you are certain to become great, successful men in whatever you may undertake.

This truth also was recognized in the old days in the forest universities. The students were taught to think for themselves, to dive deep within their own minds, from these to bring to the surface nuggets of wisdom that no external study can produce.

In one respect study has been made too easy in our modern methods of education. The student does not have to think, his questions are answered at once, or, if not answered are found in books of reference. The student does not have to dig within himself, the food is dished up all prepared.

But the ancient Rishis would not have it this way. They knew that what was easily gotten was easily forgotten. Only that for which we have to labour we can appreciate and guard as a great treasure. There is no satisfaction in superficial knowledge. Only that which flashes up from within our own minds satisfies. A flash of knowledge from within brings true illumination; not any knowledge acquired from outside.

This is the fourth point I wish to impress you with: learn to think for yourselves. Don't be parrots who can only repeat what they have been taught to say. Be original. Think independently. Carve out careers for yourself, strike out into new directions, create new openings.

India needs men of original ideas; bold, strong, righteous. energetic men. Look at your Dr. Bose, Dr. Roy, Dr. Seal, Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi,—these are all thinkers, and thinking has made them great. "Young men of India," the Swami Vivekananda called out, "in you is my hope, my faith, my expectation."

Don't be satisfied simply by getting your university diploma. It is only then that your real life begins; it is only then that you must show what the university has done for you. The student life is only the life of preparation.

Let me tell you how formerly students in India were trained to think for themselves. When a Brahmacharin asked a question the Guru did not give an immediate reply, he only threw out a hint to put the student on the right track, and then he told him to go and ferret it out for himself. And the youth would go away sometimes for years and think and meditate, till at last the answer flashed from within. The student's question is answered by his own mind if only he understands how to knock at the door of knowledge. But now-a-days we are so impatient, we are so spoiled that we want to get knowledge at once, in an easy way. We don't like to think. We forget that true conviction comes only from within.

There is no greater satisfaction than to have our problems solved by our own minds. Every answer from within brings

exaltation, while answers received from outside leave us cold and unmoved. First listen to truth, then think about it, then meditate on it, then realize it. This is the process given in your scriptures.

Impatient students there have always been. In one of the oldest Upanishads we get the story of such a student. He came to his Guru, and said, "Revered Sir, teach me truth." The teacher told him that Truth was deep hidden in the cave of the heart. The student was not satisfied, "Sir," he said, "show me the truth even as one shows a horse or a cow." He was impatient, he did not want to labour to get truth, he did not want to think. What did the Guru reply? "My son," he said, "you cannot see the seer of sight, go and meditate on truth. The senses cannot reveal it, none sees it with the eye. By the intellect controlling the mind, and by constant meditation it is revealed"

In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* the story is told of a student who through patient meditation learned the truth. Satyakama having gone to the great sage Gautama, said, "I wish to become a Brahmachari with you Sir; may I approach you?" Gautama replied, "O friend, I shall initiate thee." Having initiated him, the Guru chose four hundred lean and weak cows, and said to Satyakama: "Go with these into the forest, and return when the number of cows has increased to one thousand."

Satyakama dwelt away a number of years, till the cows became one thousand.

Now, mark you, in all these years no instruction was given, no questions were answered. The boy had been initiated, and after that had been sent to the forest with cows to herd. But Satyakama was a thoughtful student. He did not waste his time idly, he meditated on the meaning of initiation, he put himself questions, and tried to solve them. What was the result? He trained his own mind to solve his problems. The answers seemed to come from outside, for all nature began to speak to him—the bull of the herd, the sacred fire, a swan, a diver-bird, from everywhere his questions were answered, but in reality it was his own awakened mind that spoke to him. Nature is always ready to reveal her secrets but we must know how to approach her. We are part of nature, and our mind a wave in the universal mind. From that universal mind all knowledge comes. Through meditation we place ourselves in rapport with the source

of all knowledge and wisdom. And when this is done light will come to us from everywhere, from trees and plants, from stars and sky, from the earth, from wood and stone.

This is what happened to ,Satyakama. Without teacher except his own mind, without books or scripture, without instruments he learned everything. And when he came back to the Ashrama, Gautama seeing him, exclaimed with great joy, " My friend, thou shinest like one who knows Brahman. Who has taught thee ? "

Gautama at once realized that his student knew truth. He could tell him only what Satyakama already knew, what his own mind had taught the boy. Satyakama had discovered the perfection that was already in him.

And now in conclusion let me remind you that your time of learning is not over when you leave the university. We learn through the whole of our life. Here, you are taught *how* to learn; here, you get training, that afterwards you may be able to draw lessons from everything and everywhere.

When Svetaketu had finished his university career at the age of 24, he came home greatly conceited and arrogant, for he considered himself well-read. Then his father questioned him, " My son, did you get the highest instruction ? Do you know the Atman, your true self ?" " No, Sir," Svetaketu replied," I do not know the Atman." Then he was sent back to study again. The highest knowledge he had not even thought of, still he was conceited considering himself well-read. But when he went back to his teacher he learned the highest truth, Tat twam asi.

When Saunaka who had already completed his Brahmacharya course and had become a householder found in his daily life many mysteries which he was not able to solve, he realized that something still was lacking in his education. So he approached the sage Angiras, and asked, " What is that, O Bhagavan, which being known, all things become known ?" Then Angiras explained that there are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired namely Para-vidya and Apara-vidya, higher and lower knowledge. Apara-vidya is that which is taught in schools and universities. Para-vidya is that by which the Immortal is known. This is the highest knowledge, to know the Immortal, theAtman, the Soul

in man. Knowing Him, all things become known. No university course, no books, no microscope or telescope can reveal to us the Immortal. He is the source of all being, of all existence, all life, all wisdom. He dwells in every heart.

"As the spider creates and absorbs, as medicinal plants grow from the earth, as hairs grow from the living person, so this universe proceeds from the Immortal." And knowing the the Immortal One himself becomes immortal.

That is the true aim of life. Try to know the Atman, seek to know him, for to him who seeks, the Atman reveals its true nature. "He who knows him," the *Kathopanishad* says, "who has his mind always under control and who is pure, reaches the goal from which he is not born again." Then all the desires of the heart are satisfied, all doubts are solved, and man lives in perfect bliss.

My friends, in this period of your life you have a wonderful opportunity to train your body and mind, to shape your character, to prepare for manhood. But remember, there is a study that no university, that no educational institution can give. That is the study of your own mind. Watch your mind, keep it pure and controlled, make it obey your command. When the mind is controlled, the body must follow. Every individual in school or out of school has to train his own nature, has to build his own character. That is an individual study for which you get no diploma, but that, if successful, will place you on the highest summit of success.

Many of the great men of America never entered a university. But they were from boyhood diligent students in the school of life. They were industrious, truthful, persevering, enterprising. They were entirely devoted to the goal they had in view; they never rested till their goal was reached.

Aim at the highest, work for the highest, think of the highest, and realize the highest. And may it be given to many of you to make your mark in the world, to distinguish yourselves, to become a blessing to your country nay, to humanity. May you all become honest, truthful, industrious, spiritual men. Then the blessings of Gods and Rishis will rest upon you for ever. Your country needs you, the world needs you.

Don't forget that with Apara-vidya you must also study Para-vidya, that higher science that deals with the soul. Study your Gita, your Upanishads, the works of the Swami Vivekananda. Study and practise religion. Introduce religion into your lives, try to realize that you are Atman. If you realize the Atman, your life will be a real success. Then you will know that all strength, all powers, all knowledge is within you. And with that realization you will be able to accomplish everything, you will not only be real men, but supermen, qualified to become world-leaders.

You have the great advantage of living in the only country where science and religion are one. All religions except Vedanta, tremble at the approach of science. It is Vedanta alone that welcomes science, that encourages science; for there it is taught that Truth alone triumphs, not ignorance. The path to Truth leads through knowledge. That path the sages followed, that path leads to the highest goal.

May we hear with our ears what is right and good; may we see with our eyes what is holy and beautiful; may we keep our body and mind under control."

Om Shantih! Shantih!! Shantih!!!

SWAMI SARADANANDA

By A Devotee

"Sarat—How hard he works, how silently and patiently he bears all troubles! He is a Sadhu, what need has he personally to do all this? Men of his type can, if they will, remain ever in uninterrupted thought of God. It is for your benefit that they are dwelling in the lower planes. Ever keep their character before your eyes and serve them with devotion."—Thus did the Holy Mother—the high-souled nun-wife of Sri Ramakrishna—observe in the course of her conversation with a devotee about the late Swami Saradananda—one of the greatest apostles of the Prophet of Dakshineswar—in whose passing away the Ramakrishna Mission has sustained an irreparable loss. Indeed the Swami placed before the modern world an ideal life combining the noblest spirit of renunciation and service, knowledge and devotion. And it was possible for him to work tirelessly for the good of others because he was first of all a man of rare spiritual attainments and powers.

Sarat Chandra Chakravarty, for that was the name by which the Swami was known before he renounced the world, was born in Calcutta of pious Brahmin parents in the year 1866 A. D. As a boy he studied along with his cousin, the late Swami Ramakrishnananda, in the Albert School, Calcutta. Both of them were members of a society started under the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen, and came to know of Sri Ramakrishna from some of their fellow members who had seen the Master in Keshab's Brahmo Samaj. It was on the anniversary of the association which was once celebrated at the temple of Dakshineswar that the cousins were blessed to see Sri Ramakrishna for the first time.

This meeting of the disciples with the Master proved to be a momentous one. Sri Ramakrishna who could peep into the past and future of the boys held before them the life of perfect chastity and renunciation which they later on embraced as instructed by the Master. He said—"One must smear the hand with oil before breaking open the jack fruit. The tender plant is to be hedged round, lest it be eaten up by goats. Bricks and tiles, if burnt with the trade marks on them retain the marks for ever. Similarly if you enter the world after attaining devotion to the Lord, after making some progress in the path of spirituality you will not sink in the mire of worldliness." "But now-a-days", the Master continued, "parents get their boys married while they are quite young, and pave the way to their spiritual ruin. Sometimes as soon as the boys finish their studies they find themselves fathers of children. They have to struggle hard to find a job for the maintenance of the family. Perhaps they find one with a low pay. But they are at a loss to feed many mouths with the small income. So naturally they have to keep themselves busy with the thoughts of earning money. How is it possible for them to think of God and religion?" "Then Sir," asked one of the boys "is it wrong to marry?" Sri Ramakrishna instead of giving any direct reply, asked him to take a book from the shelf and read certain passages from it. The boy read the words of Jesus Christ,—"For there are some eunuchs. which were so born from their mother's womb; there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." The next passage was St. Paul's—"I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to

marry than to burn." To this Sri Ramakrishna added that marriage was at the root of all bondage. But one among the audience interrupted him saying—"Do you mean to say, Sir, that marriage is against the will of God ? And how can creation go on if people cease to marry ?" To this Sri Ramakrishna replied with a smile, " Don't you worry about that. Those who like to marry are at perfect liberty to do so. What I said just now was between ourselves." The cousins returned home, fascinated by the wonderful personality of the Master, determined to visit him henceforward and to learn from him the secrets of the spiritual life. About Sarat and Sasi Sri Ramakrishna used to say that both of them were disciples of Jesus Christ in a previous incarnation. The remarkable spirit of apostolic love and self-abnegation that actuated the disciples fully confirmed this assertion of the Master. This was probably the reason why Swami Saradananda lost all outward consciousness when he first saw the statue of St. Peter in Rome. A perfected soul that he was, he came to the world, moved by the misery of others and helped men and women to follow the way to peace and blessedness till the very last days of his life.

It was since the year 1882 when Sarat was studying in the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, that he began to visit Sri Ramakrishna regularly. The Master who is said to have remarked at their very first meeting about the disciple's spirit of stern renunciation, was much pleased to note his great spiritual potentiality. One day he asked Sarat, " How do you like to realise God ? What divine vision do you like to see in meditation?" "I do not want to see any particular form of God in meditation" replied the young disciple, " I want to see Him manifested in all creatures of the world. I do not care for visions." The Master remarked with a smile, " That is the last word about spiritual attainment. You cannot have it all at once." " But I won't be satisfied with anything short of that," replied Saratchandra, " I shall strive my best until I am able to attain to it." Indeed the mainspiring of the universal love that filled the Swami's mighty heart later on was his realisation of the divinity in all, which he attained through superhuman spiritual strivings after the passing away of the Master.

Sarat whole-heartedly accepted Sri Ramakrishna as his spiritual guide. And it was at the feet of the Master that he met his great brother-monk Swami Vivekananda. He was struck with the purity and strength of his character, and came to love and

revere him only next to his Guru. During the days of his life as a student in the arts college and later on in the medical college he also came to know the other disciples of the Master, and soon their acquaintance ripened into an indissoluble bond of mutual love and regard which marked all the members of the spiritual brotherhood that came to be formed round the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. In 1885 the Master fell ill, and Sarat was one of the foremost of the disciples who served him night and day with remarkable steadfastness and devotion. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, Sarat took the vow of life-long celibacy and poverty, and became one of the blessed monks who were instrumental in founding the first monastery of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna under the guidance of the greatest of their brother disciples, Swami Vivekananda. Here along with his fellow monks he passed his days in strenuous ascetic practices and religious disciplines, in deep study and lively discussions on comparative religion and philosophy, literature and history, arts and sciences. The primary goal of all these all-renouncing souls was to realise in their own lives the great spiritual ideal that was embodied in their Divine Master. An intense earning for Divine vision seized their soul. Their devotional songs, chantings of scriptures, repetition of the Lord's name, meditation, deep and silent,—all these used to make the whole atmosphere of the Math vibrant with spiritual consciousness. But not all the monks lived in the monastery all along. There came a time when Sarat like many of his brother monks left the Math and led the life of a Parivrajaka or of a wandering Sannyasin visiting many places of pilgrimage in the Himalayas and elsewhere, passing through extreme hardship and privation, but always assiduously engaged in the most austere spiritual culture.

During these years he visited Benares, Brindaban, Puri and other places in the plains. He also travelled in the Himalayas sometimes in the company of Swami Vivekananda and other fellow-disciples. With the brother monks he visited Almora, Karna Prayag Rudra Prayag and Srinagar. At the last place he along with them took up his residence in a lonely hut on the banks of the Alakananda and studied the Upanishads and other scriptures under Swami Vivekananda who saturated the minds of the monks with the meaning and message of the Eternal Religion of India. At Hrishikesh he also lived with the brethern for a considerable time in a hut built by their own hands, performing strenuous

spiritual practices and living on *madhukari Bhiksha*, literally begging a few morsels of food from each house, "even as the bee supports itself with particles of honey gathered from each flower," After passing years in travel and spiritual practice Swami Saradananda returned to the monastery near Calcutta.

The period of the Swami's Sadhana, which covered ten long years beginning with the demise of his Master, was now over, and henceforth began the years of his unremitting service and ministration, of sharing with others the rare fruits of his spiritual realisation and achievement. In 1896 the call came from Swami Vivekananda who wrote to him before his departure from America to join him in London. At the bidding of his chief, he at once sailed from Calcutta and reached London in April, 1896 before his brother-monks arrival there. The meeting of the two fellow disciples after several years was an event of great joy. Many were the happy reminiscences and exchanges of thoughts. Each learnt with great interest the news which the other had to deliver. Both the Swamis made their home in St. George's Road, London. Here Swami Vivekananda began his lectures and classes which attracted many of the best in English Society. Having initiated his brother monk into the work of a preacher by personal example and instruction, the Swami sent him to New York at the insistent request of friends and diciples. By his charming personality and his masterly exposition of Hinduism the new teacher drew a large number of sincere and spiritually-minded men and women "who were attracted to the Vedanta by the other Swami's eloquence and example but who had not sufficient opportunity for personal contact to become what one would call, *established* in it." Soon the Swami earned a great reputation for himself, and was invited to be one of the teachers in the Greenacre Conference of Comparative Religions held in July, 1896. There he delivered lectures on the Vedanta and held classes on the Yoga systems with great ability. After the session of the Conference was over the Swami visited Boston, Brooklyn, Cambridge and New York at the earnest invitation of friends, and delivered series of lectures to most appreciative audiences. Success was with him since the very beginning of his ministration in America. The *Boston Evening Transcript* in reporting his first lecture delivered in America wrote—"The Hindu teacher has the impassive fascination of his race, and although this was his first public lecture in the English tongue he made himself heard and understood with great clearness and

force. . . . . After the lecture there was an interesting discussion in which the profound principles of the Vedanta Philosophy were brought out with still more telling force."

Towards the close of October 1896, the Swami gave a charming lecture at the Brooklyn Ethical Association on "The Ethical Ideas of the Hindus," which along with some of his other lectures and writings has been embodied in his "Stray Thoughts on the Literature and Religion of India." He also spoke at the Vedanta Society of New York, and from there returned to Cambridge, Mass. where he taught until the New Year. For two months he took charge of the class at the Vedanta Society of New York. But owing to the earnest calls from other places he could not stay there long. He next joined the Cambridge Conferences, and made a deep impression on all who listened to him by his lucid exposition, spirit of friendliness and toleration for other religions. After a short visit to New York in May, the Swami went to Greenacre to be present again at the next annual session of the Conference where he gave a series of interesting lectures on the literature and religion of India. He visited Boston again and spoke before the Free Religious Association on the "Sympathy of Religions." The month of October he spent in Montclair where he lectured three times a week to large numbers of cultured men and women of the city. The spheres of the Swami's usefulness were fast expanding. It was at this time that he was called back by his leader Swami Vivekananda to help him in his work in India, particularly in organising the chief monastery at Belur and training the monks there as preachers and teachers of Vedanta.

Swami Saradananda left New York for India on the 12th of January, 1898. His American friends and students felt very sorry to lose him from their midst. Dr. Lews G. Janes, Director of the Cambridge Conference thus wrote to the Editor of the Brahmavadin in appreciation of the Swami and his work—"The many friends of the Swami Saradananda in Cambridge and vicinity cannot permit him to return to India without expressing through your column's their hearty appreciation of the excellent educational work which he accomplished in this country, and the fine accopaniment of personal character and influence which greatly strengthened the effect of the work wherever it was conducted. On every hand, the friends of the Swami express a sense of personal loss in his departure, and hope that he may some time return to America where his work is so heartly appreciated. In

Cambridge, the classes in the Vedanta philosophy, constituting a single feature in the broad field of comparative study outlined for the Cambridge Conferences, attracted large and intelligent audiences, in part made up of professors and students of the Harvard University. The Swami's exposition of the principles of the Advaita doctrine, in just comparision with other views which are held in India, was admirably lucid and clear. His replies to questions were always ready and satisfactory. His great fairness of mind and soundness of judgment enabled him to present the doctrine in a manner which at once convinced all of his sincerity and earnestness, while it disarmed the factious opposition which is sometimes stirred up by a more dogmatic and assertive manner. In Boston, Waltham and Worcester Mass., the Swami Saradananda also conducted courses of lectures which were largely attended and which everywhere manifested a sustained interest in his subject."

The Swami returned to India in the beginning of February, 1898. Since his arrival he set himself to the task of organising the Ramakrishna Math at Belur. But he did not limit his activities to the monastery alone. During the summer of 1899 he made a tour in the cities in Kathiawar, accompanied by Swami Turiyananda, and created a great interest in Vedanta and the Vedantic movement by his illuminating talks and lectures. In reporting one of his lectures a correspondent wrote to the *Brahmavadin*—"The Swami Saradananda's lecture on the 'Essence of the Vedas', made a deep impression upon all the people of Bhavnagar, Kathiawar. It was delivered in the lecture-hall of the Bhavnagar High School on 15th April 1899. . . His noble figure, his majestic voice, the fire and grandeur of his eloquence, gave him a power to inculcate into the minds of his audience the Vedanta doctrine far better than any other teacher of Vedantism I have known." In December of the same year he went to preach the message of his Master in Eastern Bengal, and delivered lectures and talks at Dacca and Barisal, and won new and enthusiastic adherents and admirers for the cause of Sri Ramakrishna. After his return from Dacca he lectured regularly at the Sunday meetings of the Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta. But his main work lay for some time at the Belur Math which he organised in a masterly way. He held before the young Brahmacharins and Sanyasins the ideals of strict discipline and religious practice, and helped them to mould their lives and be trained for future work. With the

vision of a seer, Swami Vivekananda saw that his illustrious brother who possessed remarkable devotion and steadiness, sound judgment and tender heart and was at the same time acquainted with the Western method of organisation, was to play a great part in the life of the organisation he founded for fulfilling the mission of his Master. And that was the reason why he called him away from America all of a sudden, and placed on him the onerous duties of a Secretary which he fulfilled with unique ability and success till the very end of his earthly career.

For nearly three decades Swami Saradananda was the chief organiser of the Ramakrishna Mission in its manifold activities, missionary, educational and philanthropic. As the right hand man of Swami Brahmananda, the late President of the Mission, he directed and guided with infinite love and patience, tact and resourcefulness the infant organisation left to him by Swami Vivekananda, and developed it into a mighty organisation with its numerous monasteries, educational institutions and homes of service in India and abroad. But the Swami was not an organiser only. During the long period of his ministration he revealed himself in his manifold aspects. We have been privileged to see him as a mighty teacher who transformed the lives of innumerable souls by awakening the spirtual power latent in them. We have been blessed to see him further as the inspired author of "Sri Ramakrishna Lila prasanga"—the immortal life of his Master ; of "Bharate Sakti Puja"—the admirable treatise on the worship of the Mother-power ; of the "Stray Thoughts on the Literature and Religion of India"—a popular and scholarly work giving a true insight into Indian culture, ancient and modern ; as the learned editor of the Bengali monthly, "The Udbodhan" which has been carrying the inspiring message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda to the heart of Bengal ; as a powerful speaker who inspired his audience by his charming eloquence ; as a great scholar interpreting the scriptures with a wonderful lucidity that removed the doubts of the listeners ; as a devotee of the Divine Mother, who looked upon all women as Her living embodiments ; as a staunch supporter of the women's movement, whose fostering care has developed the small girls' school started by Sister Nivedita into a big institution with a spacious house of its own ; as a wonderful social servant ever ready to lay down his life in the service of of others ; as an expert musician trained by Swami Vivekananda himself, who

enchanted the hearts of his hearers by his devotional songs; as an unfailing friend, a kind adviser, a loving guide, a tamer of men; as a saint of steady wisdom who in the memorable words of the *Bhagavadgita*, was "unshaken by adversity, unmoved by happiness, free from affliction, fear and wrath, and satisfied in the Self by the Self."

The last few years of the Swami's life were spent greatly in prayer and meditation. The thoughts of external activities lost all attraction for him. He saw before him the passing away of most of his brother-disciples and co-workers. With the demise of the Holy Mother and of Swami Brahmananda, the Swami began to feel that his life's task was over. Even the desire to write the concluding chapters of the Life of his Master left him altogether. On being asked about the matter he once said to a devotee, "I have lost all impetus for work. Now it seems to me that I have understood very little of Sri Ramakrishna. Writing or speaking about him appears to me as only moving on the surface. The only desire with me now is to lose myself completely in the meditation of his divine life and character." And lost himself he has through Mahasamadhi in uninterrupted communion with his Lord and Master. But he has left behind him the sweet memory of his divine life, and the choicest fruits of his spiritual realisations in his immortal works which will ever continue to inspire and enlighten the seekers after truth in the dark and dreary wilderness of the world The entire Ramakrishna Mission stands to-day as the monument to his glory. May the mighty spiritual power that has broken down the shackles of the mortal frame, work with greater freedom and intensity in everwidening spheres and regions for the spiritual regeneration of India and the world!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BARA-WAFAT.

In spite of the many communal riots that are taking place in many parts of India, it is quite refreshing to observe that the two great communities of India, the Mussalman and the Hindu, have joined hands in some places to celebrate the Bara-Wafat, the Prophet's Birthday, which happened to fall on the 9th of September this year.

Mahommed was born in Mecca in the year, 570 A.D. and not long after his birth he became an orphan. He was adopted by his uncle Abu Talib, a leader of the Quraish—one of the most powerful

and noble tribes of Arabia. The condition of Arabia was then very deplorable—gross licentiousness, idolatory, superstition, and barbarity being the order of the day. From the very beginning of his life Mahommed had a distaste and dislike for this state of the Society in which he was born and his serious mein and truthfulness scon brought him the appellation *Sadiq* and *Ameen.* Society could not please him; that made him naturally turn to Nature and there in communion with her he found solace and comfort. As he grew in years he began to feel more and more for his fellowmen and after forty long years of strenuous struggle and discipline came to him the Inner Call. He felt he had new a message to deliver to humanity and this made him the founder of a new religion. "Standing on a small hill, under the burning desert sun" he called upon the Meccans to follow the path of virtue, the path of God. And the people of Mecca heeded him not. But when he began to denounce their evil customs and manners they got enraged and actually threw dirt and refuse at him while some even went to the length of spitting in his face. Others tried to poison him, As is the characteristic of a prophet, patiently, meekly, and humbly he bore them all. Thus in the name of Allah he had to endure everything. "Islam" which he preached meant submission to the Divine Will and he continued preaching his doctrines submitting to all opposition and hardship. His enemies plotted to murder him. But he came out of it safe. Stones were pelted at him until he bled. But never did he shew annoyance, never did he curse his enemies. Only forgiveness issued forth from his hallowed lips. When torture and tyranny failed temptations of woman and gold were thrown in his way; he did not care for them nor did he prove less vehement in his condemnation of the sad state of his Society. Withstanding all tribulations and with a certainty and conviction he proclaimed, "Know ye, all men! There is no God but God, and I am His Messenger" By this he did not claim divinity for himself; nor did he make any special claim for his teaching. He said he came to teach Islam which was nothing new but only a repetition of what successive prophets tried to impart to the people in earlier periods of human history. Still, hostile and bitter was the reception accorded to his message with the result that finally he was driven out from Mecca with his friend and comrade Abu Bakr. But Medina gave him a hearty welcome and the people of that place listened to him. Soon Medina accepted Islam. It has been pointed out by a historian of

his life that poverty and suffering were his lot and yet he revelled and gloried in them. To-day he is the one bond that unites more than three hundred millions of human beings in the face of this earth—a bond that has affixed on the Muslim community its stamp of discipline and brotherhood the like of which one cannot see in any other religion of the world.

The Upanishads have rightly declared that Truth alone conquers and it is adherence to the truth that crowned the efforts of Mahommed with success. It is this truth which lies imbedded in Islam that makes it one of the living religions to-day. For why do the teachings of Krishna or Christ, Buddha or Mahommed appeal to the sense of humanity to-day as when they were delivered? The answer is simple. In spite of the filthy accretions of ages lie hidden in these religions nuggets of gold—priceless truths which the higher inborn sense of every human being is compelled to recognise and look upon with awe and reverence : otherwise these religions would not be living to-day.

Now the essence of the prophet's teaching was the Oneness of God and the Equality of man. It was not a mere Islamic brotherhood as some understand that Mahommed preached but it was a universal brotherhood. In fact it may be safely asserted that Democracy is the child of Islam. Mahommed could not have conceived it if he were a bigot. Islam has been maligned as a religion of the bigot—a religion which allows its followers to wage war against the infidels, nay, more, which consideres the slaughter of the unbelievers as an act of mercy. There is no justification for this imputation; for the Qu-ran unmistakeably and un-equivocally states, "*There is no compulsion in religion.*" Surely he did not despise other religions or their prophets. Otherwise how could he proclaim, " All people are a single nation; So Allah raised us as bearers of good news and as warners." He wanted his followers to live with their co-religonists in peace and brought home to their minds that as God was Almighty He could have made all of them of one religion if he wished and thus impressed the Muslims the necessity of recognizing other faiths and other prophets. Says the Prophet, " Surely those who believe, and those who Judaize, and Christians and Sabians, whoever believeth in God and the last day, and doth that which is right, they shall have their reward with their Lord; there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved"—Qu-ran Ch. II. And according to Muslim divines the wars in which the Prophet took part were

only defensive wars for preserving society from plunging into chaos. And Mahommed wanted "the believers" to do likewise. In fact Mahommed condemned wars and fighting for the purposes of achieving political ends. Says a Mahommedan writer, "It prescribed the following three occasions when unsheathing the sword is declared a necessity: (1) to restore peace and order and defend life and property; the sword is to be sheathed if the enemy desists from fighting, (2) *to establish religious freedom, so that each and every person may be at liberty to exercise freely his individual judgment and have his own opinion in religious matters and (3) to protect the Houses of God irrespective of religion.*" (The italics are ours.) They shew how broad, an outlook the founder of Islam had and how his heart went forth to all irrespective of creed and clime. Hence it will not be far wrong if we conclude that the injunctions of Mahommed were misinterpreted by the hordes of barbarians and selfish and imperialistic rulers as sanctions to pillage and plunder or extend their territories for the sake of Islam.

It is fourteen centuries since Mahommed saw the light at Mecca and more than twelve centuries since his great religion found its way into this country. And ever since, India has, except at a few intervals, suffered from untold persecution at the hands of his followers. Mahommed—the "Praised One"—the Mahommedans of India have made an object of terror to the majority of the Hindu population up to the present day. The ordinary Hindu has judged the Prophet not from a study of the Qu-ran but by a living contact with his professed followers and in these followers of Mahommed he has observed more cruelty and more thirst for blood than in the followers of any other religion. He has further heard some Mussalmans declaring that the Qu-ran consideres the killing of unbelievers as an act of mercy. In actual experience too he has found the votaries of Islam exhibiting an in-ordinate lust for power, woman and gold. His judgment based upon these and similar facts cannot but be deficient if not mistaken.

It is a happy sign of the times, however, that a few men of light and leading among Mahommedans have begun to lay stress upon the above cosmopolitan view of Mahommed and remove the bigotry which has been at the bottom of many a broil between Muslims and Hindus which to-day are disturbing the peace and happiness of both the communities. One Hindu speaker at the celebration of the prophet's Birthday in Madras said : " A cultural

understanding between these two religions and a critical but friendly study of each other's religion would solve many of the communal problems now prevailing in this country." Elsewhere a Mahommedan speaker addressed his Hindu-Muslim brothers on the fundamental unity discoverable at bottom of all religions and showed how Hinduism and Islam had many things in common. Said he: "The Suffis and the Hindu Vedantins are one. With the pure Vedic religion of old no Mahommedan can possibly find fault with." No less a person than Sri Ramakrishna who, instructed by a Moulvi, practised the Mahommedan Sadhanas, has after personal realisation declared in our own times that the Lord would reveal Himself to any one if he but care to follow sincerely the path laid down by his own religion. It was the Swami Vivekananda who declared once that a true Hindu is he who is at the same time a true Christian and a true Mussalman. He opined that "without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind." "We want to lead mankind where there is neither the Vedas nor the Bible not the Qu-ran: yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas the Bible and the Qu-ran. Mankind is to be taught that religions are but varied expression of the Religion which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

'For our own motherland a junction to the great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body." So said Swami Vivekananda, the patriot saint of India. May we hope that the celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday by Hindus and Mussalmans together will be the beginning of a new era of concord—peace and good-will amongst mankind at large and Hindus and Mussalmans of India in particular.

THE VIA MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION.

In the last session of the Imperial Education Conference held in London the question as to whether vernaculars or English should be the medium of instruction in the British Empire was discussed. Dr. M. P, West the Principal of the Training College Dacca is reported to have pleaded for English on the ground that "Vernacular was the language of poetry and religion." and that "if the student was deficient in English he had no chance of access to the world's literature or information." Such a remark, we are

afraid, is like putting the cart before the horse and therefore, forced and unnatural. Instruction through the medium of a foreign language not only hinders the natural growth of a student's mind but causes a great strain on his very vitality, while instruction through the mother tongue is most scientific, involves less expenditure of energy and facilitates the growth and assimilation of knowledge. Let us examine at some length the suitability of vernacular as the medium of instruction.

In the first place, the student thinks and talks in his mother-tongue and it will be admitted by all that the subtle and true import of any subject he learns can find a ready and easy entrance into his mind best if instruction is imparted through his own language. On the other hand a foreign language could only cramp his powers of understanding and create confusion in his mind. Unable to get at a clear conception of the subject taught the student takes to cramming with the result that he does not digest what he learns but even in his attempt at cramming he loses his capacity for original and independent thinking. With this loss of mental energy his body too suffers; so intimate is the connection between the body and the mind.

In the second place, if the medium of instruction be vernacular it economises time in as much as the student could right up plunge into his subject instead of wasting his years on the study of a foreign language before he understands the subject he wishes to pursue.

In the third place, it helps the formation of the student's character by bringing him into closer touch with the ideals of his nation and culture. The vernacular gives him greater opportunities of getting acquainted with the lives of great men that lived and thought in his own land and imbibing their spirit. It cannot be gainsaid that the literature of a nation is the depositary of its genius. Therefore it is indispensible that he should be in close touch with his own literature and imbibe his own culture. Every one knows how difficult it is to translate the spirit of one language into that of another and it will be admitted by all that an attempt to impart any country's culture through a foreign language cannot but end in failure. The young student brought up in a foreign culture and in a foreign language, as at present is the case, can only make him a stranger in his own land. Sad to say that is what has happened in our own country.

The introduction of English, as a medium of instruction for over a century has done great harm to India : it has done more disservice than good to the people of this land : it has hypnotised them and made them forget their own cultural greatness. However it is a hopeful sign of the times that we have begun to discover our fault and are now trying to rectify them. We should not be understood to insinuate that the English language has done no good at all, for nothing in this world can be absolutely good or absolutely bad. The rude shock which Indian culture has received and the denationalising influence that has come as a result far outweigh the good that has accrued from the introduction and spread of the liberalizing influence of English literature. Mr. West is overzealous when he speaks that a citizen of the British Empire should have "an access to the world's literature or information". But may we ask him whether a man should first learn to be a son of his own nation or of the world. Putting first things first we have no doubt that most people will agree with us when we say that man must fit himself to be citizen of his own state and hence vernacular will stand first and foremost for the growth and welfare of this country. Mr. West and persons of his stamp perhaps in their zeal for their national literature cannot see eye to eye with us and know and feel what great loss we have sustained by the following of this policy in India. It was actuated by this conviction that the veteran educationist of Bengal, Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee in one of his convocation addresses observed that instruction through the medium of Vernaculars is most natural and "fraught with possibilities which the best heads cannot forsee."

Until the present educational system is thoroughly overhauled and recast on national ideals, education in India will never turn out to be the panacea, as it ought to be, for all the evils which India now suffers from.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Nachiketa (In Bengali)—By Swami Sambuddhananda—Published by Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Sonargaon, Dacca. Pp. 50. Price As. 6.

All Students of Sanskrit are familiar with the name of Nachiketa. The author in this little Bengali brochure before us has attempted to dramatise that Vedic parable of the Kathopanishad. Nachiketa seeks the path to Yama's world. First the lad meets

a peasant—who could not point him out the way. Nor could the scholar whom he sees next help him in his great quest. But then he comes across a spiritual Sadhaka who enlightens him. Now Nachiketa enters Yama's presence and the Upanishadic dialogue is made less tedious by interspersing scenes in which the three other characters and Yama play their part. As a piece of histrionic art the play may have its defects; but in presenting the great and ancient truths in an attractive form to the youngsters of schools and colleges the author may be considered to have succeeded.

The Mediator. By C. Jinarajadasa. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 95.

The booklet before us contains twelve short essays from the pen of Mr. Jinarajadasa, the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society. It begins with an essay on the 'Mediator' and hence the title of the booklet. Who is this Mediator? He is the man who can stand between man and God and 'through whom the life streams descend and ascend to and from all men'—such as a Buddha or Christ. Every man can aspire to this place if he is prepared to take pains to attain to it. The booklet ends with an interesting essay on the 'Joy of the Return.' The essayist has maintained the spirit of Theosophy through and through.

The Holy Life of our Lord and Saviour Bhagawan Shri Krishna, by S. N. K. Bijurkar, B.A—Published by the author at Coondapoor, South Kanara. Parts I, II & III. Price annas 12 each.

We have received three parts of the book and find that they furnish an interesting reading. The salient points of Sri Krishna's life have been lucidly brought out and the book is bound to be useful especially to those who have not had the pleasure of reading the life in any of the vernaculars of India.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI NIRMALANANDAJI AT TAMLUK

In response to an invitation from Tamluk, Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji, President Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bangalore, visited Tamluk on the 2nd September and was given a cordial reception by the people who mustered strong at the landing ghat and took him to the local Ramakrishna Sevashram with music and procession. Besides conducting the evening and morning classes held at the Ashram the Swamiji addressed a meeting of the ladies

on the 3rd September. In a short speech the Swamiji elucidated the doubts and difficulties raised by the ladies present. A public meeting on the 4th September was also held at the local High School Hall where an address was presented to him and the Swamiji delivered a neat and appealing speech on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. In concluding it he said that it did not matter whether the people bowed down before Sri Ramakrishna as a person, or not. What was most needed was to follow the principles he inculcated and that and that alone would bring in its train, economic, moral, social and spiritual advancement of the people. The Swamiji left Tamluk for Belur on the 5th September.

LECTURES BY SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA

In the course of his short stay in Madras, Swami Raghavananda delivered three lectures, two at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore and another at the Presidency College under the auspices of the Sanskrit Association of that college. The subjects for his discourses were, "The Science of Yoga," "Human Affection and Divine Love" and "Vedanta in the West." The Swami left for Ooty on the 7th of September.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT OOTACAMUND.

The first of Swami Yatiswarananda's lectures came off on the 10th August on the occasion of the gift of the Panchakshara Hall to the Ramakrishna Mission. The Swami began by giving a brief sketch of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda which were fraught with such tremendous consequences for the furure of India and the world. He showed how religion was a living reality with these great souls and not a matter of book learning or talk. Their life and teachings stemmed the tide of materialism, scepticism, and denationalization. India and the world needed spiritual strength, and the way is to deepen their ideals of renunciation and service. Service, service of man as the manifestation of God,—not mere charity or philanthropy must be the watch-word.

In the second lecture delivered on Sunday the 14th August at the Ramakrishna Ashrama the Swami spoke on the "Ideal of Life." The Swami said that all men are seeking happiness and bliss consciously or unconsciously. He then compared the various ideals of happiness held by various sects in the world,—the materialists, the stoics, Purvamimamsakas, the Jains, the Buddhists, and the Vedantins and showed how the ideal of Infinite Bliss is realised by realising God Who is Bliss Infinite Itself.

The third discourse was on the "Message of Sri Krishna," on the occasion of Sri Krishna Jayanti celebration in the Panchakshara Hall on the 21st. The Swami first spoke on the necessity of the Krishna incarnation and dealt with the various aspects of the Lord's life and personality. It was fallowed by a brief explanation of the significance of the Gopilila, the most misunderstood of the chapters of Sri Krishna's life. No sensuous and and impure man or woman can understand the meaning of divine love. It needed a Sukadeva of unbroken chastity, purity, and renunciation of worldliness and sensuality to understand the meaning of that divine love. It is not for others to dabble in that kind of life or in its criticism. Till we become *adhikaris* for it, let us worship Sri Krishna in other aspects. Especially in this age there is great need of the thundering voice of strength and manliness uttered by the Lord in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Here the Swami came to the subject proper and gave the outstanding messages of the Gita for this age—the harmony of various religions and of various paths, the synthesis of all philosophies which existed up to the time, the broad meaning given to Yajna which at present should be the service of the suffering millions of India.

The fourth discourse was on Varnashrama Dharma on the 24th in Panchakshara Hall. The Hindu community, he said, is at present an amalgamation of various races and tribes and Hinduism is the synthesis of the cultures of these various communities. There is no caste in religion, it is only a social order. The ideal man is the *Ativarnashrami* who has gone beyond all *Dharmas* by fulfilling the Dharmas. And it is this idea of *Dharma* that is important in the scheme of Aryan life, and all rules and regulations of life were laid down to teach this. The present day caste denominations have ceased to carry any meaning. It was *Guna and Karma* that determined caste and therefore every one can rise to the highest Brahmanhood. But the unit of society in India being a community or caste, an individual can rise only with his own community and this rise comes by the appropriation of the culture of the higher castes. It is the difference in the realisation of the spiritual, ethical, and social ideals that determined the superiority or inferiority of a caste, not profession or names. The ideal was to raise all to the highest ladder from the Pariah to the Brahman. No privilege was contemplated, levelling up, not levelling down was the way to the equalization of castes. Each individual and each

caste by fulfilling the *Dharma* for which it has made itself fit will rise to the highest goal of life where there is no Varna or Dharma, *viz.* Mukti or Self-realisation.

On Sunday, the 28th, the Swami spoke in the Panchakshara Hall on the paths to realisation. It was an auspicious day dedicated to Vinayaka, the god of wisdom and the writer of divine knowledge. Realisation, not intellectual assent or appreciation was the goal of religion. Therefore it meant life, practice, struggle. Spiritual Sadhana is necessary for all irrespective of status, professions or duties of life. There are various paths to realisation. But each must stick to his own path All the different paths by which sages of all religions have realised God can be brought under four broad scientific classifications *viz.* Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Janana Yoga. The different Yogas were then shown to be interrelated. The perfect type combined harmoniously all these three in which all the faculties of willing, knowing, and feeling were co-ordinated.

The last discourse came off on the 1st September on "Sri Ramakrishna and the Practice of Religion" The central theme of Sri Ramakrishna's life was realisation. Spiritual life can be had only by coming in close contact with spiritual life. Hence the necessity of a living *guru.* Sri Ramakrishna was the disciple of many *gurus* before he became a world teacher. He was an ideal *sadhaka* for this age of book-learning, scepticism, egoism, *Kamini and Kanchana.* And he has shown various paths to God-realisation. Acquisition of supernatural powers, breathing exercises, and grotesque postures have nothing to do with religion and spirituality. The goal is the manifestation of divinity within and to see God in all. The Swami then gave a brief description of the various *Sadhanas* of Sri Ramakrishna and pointed out that the significance of his marriage was that all including householders can lead a life of Brahmacharya without which no realisation was possible. Sri Ramakrishna's harmony of religions was not a loose combination of the best of all religions. It was a synthesis. The least difficult path for this Yuga for the majority of mankind is, according to Sri Ramakrishna Bhakti on which he used to lay great emphasis.

The Swami left Ooty for Madras on Wednesday the 14th September, On his way he halted at Tirupur for a few days. During his short stay there he delivered two lectures, one on "The Ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission" and the other on "The

Essentials of Hinduism." The Swami arrived at Madras on the 19th September after an absence of one and a half months.

RAMAKRISHA STUDENT'S HOME, PATNA

The Ramakrishna Ashram has been shifted to a more commodious house on the Govinda Mitter Road and under its auspices a Student's Home has been started with a view to supplement the present university education by the harmonious development of head, heart and hand of the boys. Only nine students have been admitted. Three have been granted free boarderships, considering their merit and straitened circumstances. The Home will admit 12 college students in all.

AN APPEAL.

ORISSA AND GUZERAT

The public is hereby informed that the Ramakrishna Mission has started relief works in the flooded areas of the District of Balasore. It is well known that the people of Orissa are generally poverty-stricken and the havoc caused by the floods have highly aggravated the situation. To ameliorate the sufferings of these poor people several parties have opened relief centres but sufficient men and money are necessary to cope with the present critical situation.

The Mission has also undertaken relief work in Cambay, Guzerat and have opened centres at Sayema and Tarapore in Kaira District where 75 villages are being relieved from these centres. Shops have been opened to supply at a cheap rate rice and seeds to persons who are unwilling to accept gratuitous relief from religious and social considerations.

We appeal, on behalf of the suffering humanity to the generous public for help. Any contribution in cash or kind, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by,

(1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Dist: Howrah.

(2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.

(3) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Khar, Bombay.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math,
District Howrah,
The 14th September, 1927.